

was carried on with distant communities.

By 500 B.C., the villagers began to build flat-topped pyramids with temples on them. Some villages, including Cuicuilco near what is now Mexico City, became religious centers. Indians came from other communities to worship in the temples. Because these people were farmers, they worshiped gods that represented such natural forces as the rain and the sun. The villages grew into towns, from the Valley of Mexico to the Gulf and Pacific coasts, and south to what is now Guatemala.

The Olmec Indians of the southern Gulf Coast made the first great advance toward civilization in the Mexico region. Between 1200 B.C. and about 100 B.C., the

Yucatán Peninsula and rebuilt Chichén Itzá, an old Maya religious center. Toltec influence spread throughout the central and southern regions. This influence included the use of stone pillars to support roofs, the worship of the feathered-serpent god Quetzalcoatl, and human sacrifice in religion. See **TOLTEC INDIANS**.

The Aztec built the last and greatest Indian empire during the early 1400's, after invading tribes ended the Toltec power. The Aztec empire extended between the Pacific and Gulf coasts, and from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec north to the Pánuco River. The Aztec were skilled in medicine, and composed music and poetry. They were rich with gold, silver, and other treasure paid

#### IMPORTANT DATES IN MEXICO

- c. 1500 B.C. Village life developed in the Valley of Mexico.
- c. A.D. 300-900 Great Indian civilizations thrived during the Classic Period.
- c. 900-1200 The Toltec empire controlled the Valley of Mexico.
- c. 1325 The Aztec founded Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City).
- 1519-1521 Hernando Cortés conquered the Aztec empire for Spain.
- 1535 Antonio de Mendoza, the first Spanish viceroy, arrived in Mexico City to rule New Spain (now Mexico).
- 1810 Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla began the Mexican struggle for independence.
- 1821 Mexico won independence.
- 1824 Mexico became a republic.
- 1836 Texas won independence from Mexico.
- 1846-1848 The United States defeated Mexico in the Mexican War, and won much Mexican territory.
- 1855 A liberal government began a period of reform.
- 1863 French troops occupied Mexico City.
- 1864 Maximilian became emperor of Mexico.
- 1867 Liberal forces led by Benito Juárez regained power.

- 1876-1880 and 1884-1911 Porfirio Díaz ruled Mexico as dictator.
- 1910-1911 Francisco I. Madero led a revolution that overthrew Díaz.
- 1914 United States forces occupied Veracruz.
- 1917 A revolutionary constitution was adopted.
- 1920 The government began making revolutionary reforms.
- 1929 The National Revolutionary party was formed.
- 1934 The government began land distribution to farmers.
- 1938 Mexico took over foreign oil-company properties.
- 1942-1945 Mexico's industries expanded rapidly during World War II to supply the Allies with war goods.
- 1953 Women received the right to vote in all elections.
- 1963 Mexico and the United States settled the 99-year-old Chamizal border dispute.
- 1966 Work began on the Chamizal project to shift the course of the Rio Grande.
- 1968 The Summer Olympic Games were held in Mexico City.
- 1976 A major hurricane struck Baja California Sur, Mexico, killing 698 persons.

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